Releases - thout

TORONTO GLOBE AND MAIL
12/22/77

JFK assassination

Secret Service probe was centred on Cuba

WASHINGTON (UPI) — The Secret Service investigation into the assassination of John Kennedy was heavily preoccupied with possible Cuban and even Chinese Communist involvement, according to documents released yesterday.

Hundreds of pages of Secret Service files given UPI under a Freedom of Information request show that aside from a routine background investigation of Lee Harvey Oswald, its probe dealt almost entirely with the Cuban angle.

The Secret Service investigation apparently concentrated on the Cuban angle because of threats against Mr. Kennedy from Cubans in Miami, where the President visited the week before his assassination in Dallas.

But nowhere in the material is there any indication the Secret Service was able to link Oswald with a Cuban conspiracy. The investigation seemed to reach the same dead end as the FBI, the Warren Commission and other probes.

In its investigation, the Secret Service checked out Cuban leads in New Orleans, Dallas, Miami, Chicago and Mexico.

Among the other items in the documents:

— The FBI monitored Oswald's activities for three years before the assassination but never told the Secret Service about him. Former Secret Service chief James Rowley raised serious questions about the slip-up in communications which he said "made it clear" criteria needed to be re-evaluated for identifying people who might be dangerous to the President.

— The head of the Secret Service's White House detail, Gerald Behn, said in a memo after the assassination that on at least two motorcades Mr. Kennedy had discouraged agents who tried to block people from approaching his limousine.

"The late President Kennedy believed he belonged to the people," Mr. Behn wrote.

— Secret Service memoranda indicated its officials discovered possible errors or indescretions in protecting Mr. Kennedy at Dallas, and re-evaluated the manner in which the President should be guarded. They suggested they needed more manpower.

But perhaps the most intriguing document was from the special agent in charge of the Miami office, detailing an "alleged Chicom-Castro plot." Chicom is shorthand for Chinese Communists.

"This office received information from a western diplomat on 6 December 1963 which alleges that the assassination of President Kennedy was the result of a plot prepared and executed jointly by the Chicoms and Fidel Castro through intermediaries," the report begins.

The diplomat is not named in the report. The agent says the diplomat received his information through a source described as "very good."

The report listed these "basis ingredients" of the allegation:

— "Reportedly Fidel Castro is extremely worried about the current probings taking place into the assassination of President Kennedy and the possible finding that may ensue.

— "The plot to assassinate President Kennedy was arranged by Chicoms and Cuban sympathizers . . . who have been provisionally jailed in Cuba to prevent any indiscretions. The diplomat's source himself is fearful that his arrest is imminent."